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Hunt denies he was in Dallas when JFK was shot down

By STEPHEN K. DOIG
Herald Staff Writer

In a long day of cross-examination, defense attorney Mark Lane got E. Howard Hunt to acknowledge Tuesday what the nation has known for at least a decade: that Hunt once was a career CIA agent and he later took an active part in the Watergate conspiracy.



Hunt
It was Hunt's second day on the stand in Miami federal court in his libel trial against the Liberty Lobby, which published a 1978

article accusing Hunt of being involved in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Hunt was alternately amused and angered as Lane, author of a book challenging the findings of the investigations into Kennedy's murder, rehashed a past history that Hunt says is long behind him.

"I wish I had never heard of Watergate, and I wish I had never been employed by the White House," Hunt blurted at one point as Lane pressed him about his past.

Lane, hoping to undermine Hunt's insistence that he knew nothing of the Kennedy shooting, spent much of the day reading from transcripts of Hunt's testimony during the early investigations into the Watergate burglary. Key answers were perjured, Hunt

agreed each time Lane would read a passage.

"That was false, and I knew it to be false at the time," Hunt said repeatedly Tuesday.

But Hunt, who now lives in Miami, pointed out that he finally recanted the lies, told the truth about his activities with the infamous "Plumbers," and served 33

months in prison for his part in the White House conspiracy and coverup.

The "Plumbers" were the group of men who in 1972 were caught breaking in to Democratic Party headquarters in the Watergate, the crime that spawned the scandal that forced President Nixon to resign.

"This is very embarrassing to listen to that stuff," Hunt said with a nervous chuckle as Lane described several "dirty tricks" schemes proposed to Hunt by fellow conspirator G. Gordon Liddy.

One of the statements in the article is that Hunt tried to blackmail the CIA, with which he served from 1949 to 1970. After describing Hunt's demands for payments from senior Nixon aides, Lane tried to get Hunt to admit the statement in the article was true. But Hunt, though momentarily flustered, then reminded Lane, and the jury, that his demands were made to the White House and not the CIA.

Hunt also agreed with Lane that while in the CIA he had conducted psychological warfare operations against communist regimes in

Cuba and Guatemala. Hunt added that he had no personal knowledge, however, of CIA plots to kill Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

"You don't doubt that there were such plans, do you?" Lane asked.

Hunt smiled. "Well, I would have hoped there were such plans."

Late Tuesday, Lane started questioning Hunt about his activities the day Kennedy was shot. Hunt testified again that he was in Washington, shopping with his wife and children, when he heard of the assassination. Hunt's lawyers say they will offer witnesses who will testify having seen Hunt in Washington that day.

The trial, before U.S. District Judge James Kehoe, is expected to last through the week.

Setting the Record Straight

A story in Tuesday's Herald incorrectly reported that E. Howard Hunt had testified in Miami federal court Monday that he once had discussed a plot to poison columnist Jack Anderson. Instead, opposing lawyer Mark Lane told jurors about the poison plot in his opening statement. Hunt denies any participation in such a plot. The Herald regrets the error.